4: Cross L-5 (no date) 1948 E16 Slavs E16

871 study. It is therefore unlikely that Vladimir had before him
175* any models calculated to inspire the establishment of schools in the modern or even the medieval sense of the word, but rather that he employed the priests sent from Byzantium as private teachers for the younger members of prominent families connected with his court.

871 At any rate, extant literary monuments dating from the last
538 half of the eleventh century give evidence of an expanding
175* nucleus of culture in Kiev itself which is the direct result of
779 Vladimir's concern for education. It was hardly to be expected that a tremendous outburst of literary energy would ensue as soon as the seeds of learning were sown among a younger generation sprung from illiterate Varangian and Slavic sires, but the readiness with which Byzantine hagiographical and annalistic models were assimilated and imitated even before 1100 indicates an extensive interest in reading among circles brought up in a tradition of culture to the founding of which Vladimir contributed. That the basis of this culture was mere literacy—the ability to read the Psalms, the Gospels, and such Byzantine religious or historical compilations as had been translated into old Bulgarian in the days of Boris and Simeon—by no means lessens the importance of Vladimir's zeal for intellectual progress.

175* To Vladimir also belongs the credit for initiating the con-
346 struction program which within the next century transformed
[361] Kiev into one of the most impressive medieval cities. The crowning structural exploit of Vladimir's reign was thus a stone church of the Virgin, begun in 989, for the erection and decoration of which he imported artisans from Greece. It was completed and consecrated in 996. At its dedication Vladimir endowed it with a tithe of his property and income, from which donation is derived its customary name, The Church of the Tithe, or *Desiatinnaia*. Originally a basilica, it was reconstructed with five cupolas after a fire in 1017, and collapsed under the weight of a crowd of refugees when the Tartars took

4: Cross L-5 (no date) 1948 E16 Slavs E16

Kiev in 1240. No remnant of it now survives except the ruins of its foundations.

In Vladimir's day the clergy rapidly assumed a place among the ruling class. Apart from introducing new notions of judicial procedure derived from the Greek *Nomokanon*, the early clergy also undertook to advise Vladimir on affairs of state and local policy. In 992 the bishops advised the substitution of corporal punishment for fines in order to suppress brigandage and similarly suggested that the proceeds of fines in other cases should be spent on military equipment for defense against the menacing nomads. The ecclesiastical courts also assumed jurisdiction over numerous social problems and offenses which took new significance in the light of the Christian moral code: bigamy, divorce, heresy, sacrilege, witchcraft, and adultery. Vladimir thus tolerated the fusion of church and state on the basis of contemporary Byzantine usage.

By the process of conversion among the various Slavic groups, the bases of cultural and political differentiation were thus laid before the year 1000. Exposed to Christian influences since the seventh century, the Slovenes were converted by Bavarian clergy, and after their absorption into the Carolingian empire in 788, remained until the first World War in submission to one German state or another. The Croats, though in contact with the mission of Constantine and Methodius, reverted to Rome after the disciples of Methodius were expelled from Moravia, and have come down through the ages as Catholics, whatever their political allegiance. The Slavs along the Elbe and the Baltic were subjected to the most violent political and religious pressure from Saxon priests and nobles with the result that, despite heroic revolts, they were slowly pushed back toward the former Polish frontier. The Byzantine influence in Moravia lasted but a quarter of a century before the work of the proto-apostles, Constantine and Methodius collapsed, and the Moravians, like the Czechs, remained under the pastoral care of bishops of the Roman rite. Though the

4: Cross L-5 (no date) 1948 E16 Slavs E16

was the husband of a Greek princess, and the son of this union eventually became the consort of Gytha, daughter of the Saxon Harold who fell at Hastings in 1066. Kiev was thus united with contemporary European states by a series of dynastic alliances foreshadowing the customs of modern times.

Yet for all his power and wealth, Yaroslav governed by the same simple mechanism that had prevailed under Vladimir. The prince won his position by force and maintained it by personal supremacy, supported by Varangian mercenaries recruited from Scandinavia whenever domestic levies proved insufficient or disloyal, and consulting with his chief military aides, with the city elders, or with church dignitaries on matters of general policy. Yaroslav began the codification of customary civil and ecclesiastical law, encouraged both translations and original literature, and endeavored without success to emancipate the Russian Church from the Byzantine patriarchate. By his crushing victory over the nomad Pechenegs before the walls of Kiev in 1036, he made the marches of his principality safe for thirty-five years.

Beside rebuilding his father's Church of the Tithe after it was damaged by fire in 1017, he carried out a large-scale construction program which made Kiev one of the most notable medieval cities. His great cathedral of ~~Saint~~ Sophia in Kiev, with its five apses and thirteen cupolas, still contains the largest extant yardage of eleventh-century Byzantine frescoes and a series of remarkably preserved mosaics of impressive beauty. This is the one medieval Russian church which has been exhaustively studied by American archaeologists in coöperation with native Russian colleagues.

The underlying weakness of the Kievan principality lay in the fact that its stability was assured only by the prestige and ability of the ruling prince. There was as yet no sentiment of solidarity, national unity, and group interest which guaranteed that the whole system would not be overthrown by some ambitious and resolute rival from among the kindred princes in outlying cities loosely subject to the authority of the prince of Kiev and envious of his power and wealth.

10: French S-4 (no date) 1951 E16 Slavic Peoples E 1k

PART II

CHAPTER VIII

ORTHODOX WORSHIP

346 THE churches in which the Orthodox worship are prevailingly of what is known roughly as the Byzantine type. They are built on the ground plan of a Greek cross, one in which all the four limbs are of equal length. This is squared off by the containing walls beyond which the arms of the cross do not project. The crossing is covered by a dome and the four little squares left in the corners of the big square are often covered by domes also. The domes are raised upon drums, sometimes relatively high ones, which gives a characteristic and decorative appearance to the outside of the building, but with its funnel-like effect perhaps not so successful when seen from within. The square may be prolonged to the east where it ends in three apses covered by half domes, and to the west in a narthex which may be large enough to rival the main church in its proportions. This simple plan lends itself to much variety and elaboration and highly decorative effects are often produced by the multiplication of domes and cupolas and by the use of colour and pattern on the exterior walls.

There are ancient churches of the basilican form still used by Orthodox worshippers, such as the superb Church of the Holy Nativity at Bethlehem, which is said to be the oldest Christian church still in use and is erected over the traditional site of the birth of Christ. It was built by Helena, the mother of Constantine in 326, but restored and enlarged by Justinian in the sixth century.

The Russians took over the Byzantine style of church building, and added characteristic touches of their own, such

10: French S-4 (no date) 1951 E16 Slavic Peoples E16

as the curious onion-shaped cupola so often seen on Russian churches. 346

Some Orthodox churches are built of ornamental stone, and colour and patterns are introduced in the exterior walls by the use of brick and stone in conjunction. This may be seen particularly in many mediaeval Serbian churches, and in Rumania the churches are often adorned with outside paintings.

But the supreme achievement of Orthodox architecture, if not of all ecclesiastical building, is the Church of the Holy Wisdom, St. Sophia at Constantinople, which the Emperor Justinian began in the year 532 and which was consecrated five years later. The architect achieved the feat of placing a dome less than hemispherical, and with a diameter of 107 feet, upon a square. Later the rim of the dome was raised and pierced by forty windows, the effect produced by the whole being of astonishing lightness and beauty.

In the interior of an Orthodox church there are ordinarily no seats for the congregation; the normal attitude of the Orthodox at worship is standing. Their services are long compared with Western rites, but the congregation stands throughout, including the sermon should there be one. The choir also stands, in a group with their choirmaster. They are usually out of sight and they wear no distinctive robes. The singing, which is often of great beauty, especially among the Russians, is entirely unaccompanied, no instrumental music being allowed in Orthodox worship. [796]

But perhaps the most striking feature of the interior of an Orthodox church to Western eyes is the great screen, called the *iconostas*.[1] It stretches across the width of the church, completely shutting off the east-end and hiding the altar from view. It must not be confused with the chancel screen of Western Christendom. Its situation is technically quite different—it occupies the position of the Communion rails in a Western church, and separates not the whole chancel, but the sanctuary, from the rest of the church. An interesting difference in terminology may be noted here. In the Orthodox East, the altar

[1] *Ikonostás* is the Russian and most convenient form of the word. The Greek is *eikonostásion*. The form "ikonostasis", often seen in English, is neither Russian nor Greek.

10: French S-4 (no date) 1951 E16 Slavic Peoples E16

• 346 is the name not of a thing but of a place, i.e., that part of the church in which the altar—in the Western sense—stands. The Eastern name for the altar is the throne. Thus in Orthodox parlance the throne stands in the altar.

Some sort of barrier, fencing off the altar from the rest of the church, dates from very early days, and as time went on it took the form of a row of columns joined by a continuous base and an entablature. The spaces between the columns were filled in with icons, hence the name iconostas, the stand for the icons. It may be constructed of wood or brick or stone or even in rare cases of precious metal. But be it simple or elaborately rich, whether it is in a cathedral or a village church, it will be upon the iconostas that the builders will lavish their resources. It is pierced by three doors, double doors in the centre which when opened disclose the altar and the apse beyond, and single doors at each side. The one to the north opens into what is known as the Chapel of the Prothesis, and the one to the south into the vestry. The iconostas normally reaches from wall to wall, but it is of varying height. It may reach from floor to roof. The development of the iconostas into the great timber erection stretching to the full height of the church is thought to be of Russian origin, the earliest examples of such iconostases are indeed found in and around Novgorod and belong to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The iconostas is covered with icons, not haphazard but arranged in rough conformity with a general scheme. Thus upon the Royal doors are painted the four Evangelists and the Annunciation, and above them the Last Supper. To the south of the doors is the Icon of Our Lord and next to it the icon of the Patron Saint of that particular church. On the other side of that Royal door is an icon of Our Lady. The centre of the first tier of icons above the doors is occupied by the *Deesis*,[1] a triple icon showing Our Lord enthroned, with Our Lady on His right and St. John the Baptist on His left. This is, so to speak, the heart of the iconostas, the whole assembly of icons being built round it with the faces of the figures turned towards it. It is flanked on either side by the Archangels Gabriel and Michael and the twelve Apostles. The tier next above shows

[1] Prayer.

10: French S-4 (no date) 1951 E16 Slavic Peoples E16

346

icons of Feasts of the Church, often of the Twelve Great Festivals of Orthodoxy.[1] In the fourth tier are Old Testament Prophets including King David and King Solomon. Above this may be another row depicting the Patriarchs and perhaps still another filled with Cherubim and Seraphim. The scheme is not rigidly adhered to in detail, but the whole represents all creation, representatives of the Old and the New Covenants grouped in praise and intercession around the Deesis.

[781]

To the Orthodox worshipper the iconostas symbolizes the meeting place of heaven and earth: it marks the distinction and at the same time the union, of the world of divine truth and beauty represented by the sanctuary, and this imperfect world of human life symbolized by the rest of the church. As he stands in worship he contemplates this representation of all creation united in a symphony of praise and adoration. And the great doors in the centre of the iconostas mark the place where his worship reaches its climax in the solemn act of Communion. But the whole interior of the church is adorned with images in fresco or mosaic of saints and heroes of the Orthodox Faith. The triumph over iconoclasm was to lead in the eleventh and twelfth centuries to an outburst of elaborate iconography which characterized what used to be known as the "*Second Golden Age*" of Byzantine art and which made the walls of their churches a picture book in which the Orthodox found a perpetual reminder of their creed. On the walls of the narthex and the nave are depicted the great festivals of the Church, and series of ascetics, confessors, martyrs, doctors and prelates. In the half dome over the apse of the sanctuary is the Theotókos—the God-bearer seated with her Child in her arms, while high up in the great dome this whole iconographic proclamation of belief is crowned by the image of Christ, the rainbow-throned Almighty surrounded by cherubim and seraphim.

796

Within this building the principal act of worship is the Liturgy, the name which the Orthodox give to the service

[1] These are (not counting Easter, which is in a class by itself): Christmas, Epiphany, Palm Sunday, Ascension Day, Whit Sunday, Transfiguration, Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and the following feasts of Our Lady: Nativity, Purification, the Annunciation, Presentation in the Temple, and the Falling Asleep.